



THE SCHOOL OF
CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

Walking Meditation:

A simple guide

In walking meditation, we can encounter the gift of our life with each step.

Most of us know what it's like to kick off our shoes and socks, step onto grass or sand and find ourselves in direct contact with where we are standing. We suddenly feel everything. It's like waking up into a new clarity of awareness.

In the book of Exodus¹ there is a famous teaching about coming to know that wherever we are standing is holy, that all creation is the radiance of God.

As Moses stood before the burning bush that was not harmed by the fire, God said to him, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you stand is holy ground."

Teachers of the early church understood that these sandals, made from the skins of dead animals, represent distractedness, inattentiveness, all that causes us to be mentally somewhere else, at a distance from life.

"Take off your sandals" is a call to come home to the present moment, to encounter the ever-present Ground of peace that restores us to ourselves, each other, and all creation.

Practice

First, take a few slow, deep breaths. Following the flow of our breathing in and out of our body, we return our attention to the present moment.

When you are ready, begin to walk slowly, noticing each step. Be aware of your feet touching the ground. In walking meditation, we want to *know* we are walking.

¹ Exodus 3:1-5.

Bring your breathing into harmony with your steps, taking two or three steps with each in-breath, and two or three steps with each out-breath – whatever is comfortable for you.

Allow yourself to let go of any worries about the future, any regrets about the past, any concerns about the present. If such thoughts arise, just let them pass through without engaging with them.

Whether you walk for half an hour or just a few minutes, allow your awareness to embrace the total sensation of walking.

Enjoy the movement of the sky, the sight of a beautiful tree, the presence of whoever is near you. With each step, each breath, simply savour the gift of being where you are.

“Behold”, Christ says, “I have left an open door before you, which no one can close.”²

We have already been given everything we need for the journey.

² Revelation 3:8.



